

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Lee Terry (R-NE) tonight offered a bipartisan amendment with Congresswomen Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY) to restore \$35 million for a critical lead-based paint remediation grant program. The amendment, offered to an annual spending bill (H.R. 5576), passed the House of Representatives by recorded vote.

"This \$35 million will restore critical funds for the safety of our kids," Terry said. "I realize the budget is tight, but this program is too important to cut this year. Restoring the state grant program for lead-based paint remediation will go far to improve the health of children and families in low income, older homes."

The Terry - Velázquez -Slaughter amendment added \$35 million to the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Lead Control Hazard for FY 2007 - restoring the state grant program for lead-based paint remediation to its FY 2006 funding level of \$150 million. The program has been facing cuts since FY 2003, when funding was \$175 million.

Last year, for FY 2006, Terry successfully offered a similar amendment that restored \$48 million to the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Lead Control Hazard.

Many low-income Omaha families with children face the twin dangers of lead-based paint and lead-contaminated soil in their yards. In early 2003, a large section of East Omaha was declared a Superfund site after thousands of yards tested positive for high levels of lead contamination resulting from a nearby lead smelting plant that operated for more than a century.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 1,600 children in East Omaha may have harmful levels of lead in their bodies. The Omaha City Planning Department estimates that up to 48,000 young children are potentially endangered. Nationwide, nearly 434,000 children between 1 and 5 years of age have high blood lead levels.

Lead poisoning is especially harmful to young children and has been linked to asthma, brain damage, mental retardation, hearing loss, hyperactivity, and developmental delays. In extreme cases, exposure to lead has caused seizures, comas, and death in children. These health problems resulting from lead contamination are entirely preventable.

